



New Round of Farm to School Grants Kicks Off

A photograph of a carved jack-o'-lantern with a smiling face, sitting on a wooden surface. The pumpkin has triangular eyes and a wide, toothy grin. The background is slightly blurred, showing some outdoor furniture.

THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

As we head into late fall and early winter, milk prices for farmers remain volatile. Record prices this summer were offset by record costs for feed, fuel, and fertilizer. It was a dry summer for many as well. Lack of rain meant smaller yields for some crops and grazing was a challenge for many farmers. All these factors mean the farm economy remains challenging.

While we can do little to control the price of milk because of a federal pricing system, we are trying to get dairy farmers more resources to make it more affordable. I would encourage all to learn more about the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center. This center is managed by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. This regional center provides support to dairy businesses through projects

that promote the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products. One program is helping to improve infrastructure on the farm. The On-Farm Milk Storage Program was launched this fall. Applications will be taken until October 6th but we believe we will have to have a second round of grants because the program is so popular and needed. The program supports dairy farmers wanting to buy equipment and other materials that will improve milk storage, handling, and energy efficiencies. The grants (not loans) range from \$15,000 to \$50,000.

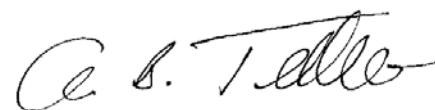
The Center also awarded a series of grants to help dairy co-ops and those making products from milk improve their packaging. Staying in-step with consumers is critical to the future of dairy. As consumer

demand grows for sustainable packaging solutions, the center has prioritized investments in projects that will reduce the use of virgin plastics and the environmental impacts of dairy product and supply chain packaging. For example, Cabot received \$323,000 to collaborate with a packaging manufacturer to produce a study on a shelf-life and feasibility that compares sustainable cheese packaging options. The \$1.1 million in funds will support dairy processors at a variety of scales and product types to conduct research, packaging development, and to analyze consumer receptiveness.

Vermont is fortunate to have this center funded by the United States

Department of Agriculture. To date, \$31.72 million has been awarded to the center for projects extending through 2026. The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is one of four in the nation. The others are in California, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. I would encourage all to sign up for the Center's newsletter (<https://tinyurl.com/DairyInnovation>) so dairy farmers and processors are aware of current and future funding opportunities.

If you have suggestions to help the center better serve dairy farmers, please contact us. We are open to new ideas to improve the dairy economy. Wishing you a safe and productive fall.



— Anson Tebbetts, Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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This Month's Recipe

Apple Cider Baked Chicken

Ingredients

- 1 large onion, peeled and cut into eighths
- 1 large lemon, sliced into thin rounds
- 2 cups apple cider, homemade or storebought
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme or 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 3 garlic cloves, minced or $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. powdered garlic
- 2 bay leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 6–8 chicken legs or thighs
- 2 large apples, each sliced into eighths
- 1 lb. small, red or Yukon Gold potatoes, halved

Directions

- Place a gallon size heavy-duty zip-top bag into a large bowl. Place the onion and next 10 ingredients into the zip-top bag, combining well. Add the chicken to the marinade. Close the bag, place in the refrigerator to marinate for at least 4 hours or up to 24 hours.
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Arrange the chicken pieces in a large roasting pan skin-side up. Pour all of the marinade, including onions and lemons over and around the pieces. Tuck the apples



and potatoes around the chicken. Cook for 1 hour and 15 minutes, stirring once halfway through to re-coat everything with the marinade.

- Arrange chicken and potatoes on a platter and sprinkle with fresh thyme leaves.



Vermont Hosted 56 Countries to Explore the Importance, Value and Concepts of Agritourism

By Scott Waterman, Vt Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

After two postponements because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the International Workshop on Agritourism was finally able to come together in Burlington, Vermont this past week. Over 500 participants from 56 countries, 44 states and 4 Canadian provinces set a new mark for participation. 350 came to Burlington with the rest joining virtually. Participants spent three days together sharing and learning about agritourism from all over the world while making trips to experience the amazing farms, food and working lands businesses here in Vermont.

"It was even better than I could have possibly imagined," said Lisa Chase from the UVM Extension Vermont Tourism Research Center and the main organizer of the gathering. "One participant called it the largest agritourism gathering in the world. I don't know if that is true, but I believe that it is the most diverse when you consider the geographies represented and the mix of farmers, researchers, tourism professionals, agricultural service providers, policymakers, non-profits, entrepreneurs, and others working in agritourism."

The Workshop was first held in Italy in 2018, after which Chase led a campaign to bring the next Workshop to Vermont in 2020. While that campaign was successful and exciting when Vermont was selected, that excitement suddenly paused when the coronavirus pandemic postponed the 2020 Workshop. Once the battle against Covid entered 2021 with vaccinations available, the decision was made to bring the world to Vermont in the summer of 2022.

"Thank you to all those who traveled from around the world to



meet in Vermont," said Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts. "The conference will help our region economically as well as help other parts of the world that are focused on growing their agritourism economy. We are grateful for this time together in Vermont and look forward to future partnerships."

Vermont's 251 towns all have something to offer the agritourist. Growers and makers are scattered throughout the hills and valleys of Vermont. The Workshop provided guidance to many of those present about how to weave those offerings together into something new and significant that builds our state's rural vitality and spread that mission around the globe.

"Our working lands have always been part of our tourism strategy and agriculture is core to Vermont's identity," said Mari Omland of Green Mountain Girls Farm and an organizer of the Workshop. "We can weave them together in a new niche that will reinforce and make a bright future for Vermont's rural population and set a shining example for how the world can accomplish the same."

Chase offered, "A farmer and community organizer from Uganda

said that this conference was life-changing and will have profound impacts on his community back home. I know that is true for many of the participants who traveled to Burlington from far and near."

"The Workshop reinforces an important aspect of agritourism anywhere in the world that it occurs. Our farmers and working lands families and businesses exemplify the spirit of sharing in everything that they do for us," said Heather Pelham, Vermont Commissioner of Tourism and Marketing. "Sharing their knowledge, experiences, products, and passion with their guests builds understanding and empathy among those who engage in an agritourism experience, while helping grow their bottom line. We look forward to growing that mission in Vermont and beyond!"

With the success of the Workshop, the positive responses and experiences, excitement now builds for the Workshop to return to Italy in 2024. For more on the Workshop visit: <https://www.agritourismworkshop.com/>

Last Call: On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Applications for the On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) are due October 6th, 2022 at 2:00pm. The grant supports dairy farmers to improve equipment related to milk storage, handling, and energy efficiency. Awards range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% match commitment. Match waivers are available.

Applicants can select from a pre-approved list of eligible specialized equipment, which includes milk storage tanks, milk pipeline, glycol chillers, milk loading systems, reclaim systems for water, cooling equipment, plate coolers/heat exchangers, and equipment installation costs. Projects must show that they will address inefficiencies around labor, energy, and product waste as it relates to milk processing. Learn more at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/farm-milk-storage-handling-grant>



DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Two NE-DBIC Funding Opportunities Opening Soon

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) will launch two grant opportunities for dairy businesses this fall. For more information about these grants and others upcoming, visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants>.

Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

The Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant will be launched in mid-October. It offers support to dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations to improve the safety of dairy products. It will also improve regional dairy's marketability. Projects can include accessing technical assistance, audits, food safety plan development, training, testing fees, and certain infrastructure upgrades. Projects that use food safety improvements to access new markets will have priority.



Grants for this project will range from \$10,000 - \$40,000 with a 25% required match commitment. For more information, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/dairy-food-safety-certification-grant or contact Brockton.Corbett@vermont.gov or 802-498-5111.

Dairy Farm Innovation Grant

Dairy Farm Innovation Grant is scheduled to be launched in November. It will fund projects across farm production and

business operations that support community- and climate-forward production. This grant will take a whole farm system approach. It will also increase collaboration with other farms or dairy

sector stakeholders. Projects may address some of the following issues: switching breeds, creating new models for collaborative/cooperative milk production, increased young farmer engagement,

alternative business ownership/management models, development of green technologies, farm-scale appropriate technology improvements, or creating a culture of continuous improvement. The NE-DBIC will also allow projects to address issues that are not listed above.

This grant will range from \$10,000 to \$75,000 with a 25% match commitment required. For more information, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/dairy-farm-innovation-grant or contact Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov or 802-585-4571.

Organic Certification Cost Share Applications Due November 1, 2022

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) offers funding assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to organic producers and handlers of agricultural products who have received organic certification through a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Certified organic producers and handlers who have paid certification fees to become newly certified or re-certified for specific scopes under the National Organic Program (NOP) are eligible for cost-share reimbursement.

Certified organic operations may receive reimbursement of up to 50% of their direct certification costs paid between October 1 and September

30 annually, not to exceed \$500 per certification scope. There are up to four eligible certification scopes (crops, livestock, wild crops, and handling), which must be individually inspected for organic certification to be eligible for reimbursement.

Allowable Costs include application fees, inspection fees, USDA organic certification costs, user fees/sale assessments, and postage.

To learn more and apply, please visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/organiccostshare

The application deadline is November 1, 2022. Reimbursement is available on a first come, first served basis.

Contact Terry Smith at terry.smith@vermont.gov or 802-828-5667.



Interested in Payments for Reducing Field Phosphorus Loss? Make Sure Your NMP Is Updated!

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets began 2022 by opening applications for the Vermont Pay for Phosphorus (VPFP) program, a new and innovative program that provides performance-based payments to Vermont farmers for reducing phosphorus (P) losses from their agricultural fields. While most current conservation programs pay cost-share for practice implementation, VPFP pays for the outcomes of practices: it recognizes that conservation practices generate value to the public and directly compensates farms for that value. This approach also targets our water quality resources towards the highest impact farms and fields – those that can do the most to minimize nutrient loss into waterways.

Farms that enrolled in the VPFP program worked closely with their Technical Service Provider (TSP) or local Conservation District earlier this spring to enter their farm management data into a new web-application called Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (FarmPREP) that uses Vermont soil and weather data to estimate annual P losses from runoff from farm fields. By using



FarmPREP, farmers can get a glimpse into how each of their individual farm fields adds to their total P-loss and plan how best to target conservation efforts to maximize their P-reductions. Farms that implement conservation practices across their farmland like cover crops, buffers, crop rotations, nutrient management planning, rotational grazing, no-till and reduced tillage may be able to use FarmPREP to show that they have achieved significant reductions in P-loss on their fields since adopting those practices. Reductions measured in FarmPREP represent improvements in farm management compared to the assumed management in the Lake Champlain Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (LCB TMDL).

Fifty-three enrolled farms, which ranged in size from around 30 acres

to almost 3,000 acres, successfully entered all their management data into FarmPREP this spring. Forty-nine of these farms are eligible to receive a P payment once they update their FarmPREP results to reflect their actual 2022 management this fall and winter.

First time VPFP enrollees, regardless of their P-reductions, are eligible for a data entry payment of \$15 per farmed acre (up to \$4,000) to compensate them for the time to work with a TA provider to enter their management data into FarmPREP. Farms that show that they have achieved more than a 40% reduction in P-loss are eligible to receive \$100 per pound of phosphorus reductions per year, up to an annual cap of \$50,000. Additionally, farms that show they have a low average annual P-loss under 1 lb P/acre or 0.5 lbs P/acre

are also eligible to receive a stewardship payment of \$3 or \$8/acre, respectively.

The Agency will open applications for 2023 enrollment in December. To be eligible to apply, you must manage hay, crop, or pasture land in Vermont, ensure that your farm business is registered with the USDA Farm Service Agency, and have an up-to-date Nutrient Management Plan that meets the RAPs for their farm size, including recent soil and manure tests.

Behind on your soil and manure tests, but interested in the VPFP program?

Take your tests now so you are ready to apply to the program this winter!

For more information on the Vermont Pay for Phosphorus program contact Brodie Haenke at Brodie.Haenke@vermont.gov or 802-636-7852.

The Vermont Pay for Phosphorus Program is supported by the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, under a Regional Conservation Partnership Program Alternative Funding Arrangement with the Agency.



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VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030: Marketing

Editor's note: This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>

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What's At Stake?

Over the past 20 years, the local food category evolved from an emerging to a maturing market. In a mature market, the rate of growth for the category slows, and while the overall size of the category is larger, increased competition threatens individual market share. This requires enterprises, in this case Vermont farms and food producers, to invest in more strategic, responsive marketing or be left behind. To address these challenges, local food producers must become proficient in leveraging their “marketing mix” to drive sales. A “marketing mix” is



defined by marketing professionals as the seven P's: product, price, place, promotion, people, processes, and physical evidence.

Current Conditions

Over the past 20 years, with the exception of fluid milk and a few value-added products, Vermont-produced food has been shifting from primarily direct-to-consumer sales (e.g., farmers markets and community supported agriculture) to direct-to retail sales (e.g., self-delivery to stores and restaurants) and distributor-serviced wholesale. As demand for “local” food has grown, so has the number of producers striving to fulfill this need. This has led to reduced market share for many, the outright demise of several, and expansion and consolidation for a few. To succeed in this environment producers need to be nimble and business-savvy, and invest in

“We aren't looking for new vendors so much as expanding the volume from current vendors. If you want to come knocking on my door what's your niche – what's your in? I've already got all these other growers. What do you bring that they don't have?”

— Nathan Daniels,
Produce Purchaser New England, Albert's.

marketing.

In a direct-to-consumer setting, producers are often interacting with the consumer and can “sell” the product, tell their story, and develop a personal relationship. This direct relationship is a powerful marketing tool and can simplify the marketing mix, requiring primarily an investment in human capital. In retail and distribution sales, the producer and end

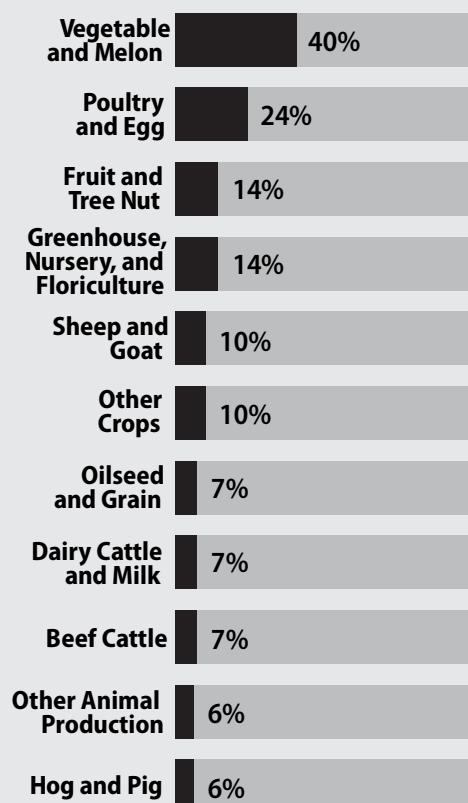
user become distanced from one another. This distance requires the producer to augment relational marketing with marketing mix tactics that support the product's ability to sell itself (e.g., an eye-catching label, price, and packaging), as well as promotion to build brand awareness (e.g., paid advertising and a strong online presence.)

Product, Price, and Promotion

Current Conditions

“Local” is a product feature. As this feature becomes ubiquitous, its value decreases. Local food producers increasingly need to innovate, be it expanding product lines or adding value with new production methods (e.g., “gluten-free”), to extend premium, product, and brand life cycle. Producers can also become more efficient to absorb downward price pressure. However, the cost of production in Vermont remains higher than in many parts of the country even as many Vermont producers strive for optimal efficiency.

Percent of Farms in 2017 with Sales Direct to Retail Markets, Institutions, Direct to Retail Markets, Institutions, and Food Hubs, by Farm Type



Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Investing in promotion and branding is essential to building brand loyalty and price resiliency, but adds time and expense.
- Regional aggregators, distributors, and retail chains may each have different standard specifications for products and producers.
- Retail product placement will impact sales velocity and may increase marketing costs.
- Promotion and branding costs can compound the price discrepancy for Vermont producers competing in price-driven wholesale environments.

Opportunities

- Brand audits can help producers identify opportunities to refine their message, product, promotion, and packaging to better achieve their sales goals.
- Guerilla marketing tactics (i.e., using surprise and/or unconventional interactions) can be an affordable way to establish direct contact with customers.
- Producers who do not have the time, inclination, or interest in doing their own marketing to achieve their sales goals can hire marketing professionals.

Placement

Current Conditions

Whether it be attending a sufficiently populated farmers market, gaining placement into a particular retail store or distributor catalog, or getting placed at eye level on a shelf, placement can be a determining factor

A “marketing mix” is defined by marketing professionals as the Seven P’s:

Product: product design, recipe, ingredients, packaging, production practices.

Price: suggested retail price, price to distributor or wholesaler, margins. **Placement:** market channel, geography, shelf placement.

Promotion: paid advertising, merchandising, events, social media, public relations, point of sale.

People: sales representatives, customer service representatives, brokers, delivery staff, office staff, warehouse staff.

Processes: production, sales, order fulfillment, distribution, inventory management.

Physical Evidence: tangible goods received or services rendered, physical invoices, physical places of business, retail locations, internet presence.



in a product or brand’s longevity because placement directly correlates to market access and sales velocity. Increasingly, producers, retailers, and distributors are expressing market saturation and recommend a producer have something new, unique, or different to offer, or be able to succinctly express why they are better than the buyer’s current supplier. I have something new, unique, or different to offer, or be able to succinctly express why they are better than the buyer’s current supplier.

Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Direct sales locations may be self-limiting regardless of costly marketing investments (e.g., a roadside stand on a remote dirt road).
- Producers may need to invest in a broker to gain a retail buyer’s attention. Brokers can be expensive and may limit who they work with.
- Direct-to-retail and distributor-to-retail sales add distribution costs and logistics, which can be complex and require new skills and knowledge (see Distribution brief).

Opportunities

- In a direct-to-consumer channel, incorporating entertainment and recre-

ation can be a successful placement improvement.

- Creative point-of-sale and packaging materials can attract attention to a product even if placement is poor.
- Marketing that explains what makes a product truly unique can assist with placement barriers.
- Being first to market with opportunities or filling gaps that exist in the market has been a successful tactic for Vermont producers.

People, Processes, and Physical Evidence

Current Conditions

Having the people, processes, and physical evidence in place to support sales helps establish a competitive edge. People include everyone from production to sales and marketing, office staff, management, and supply chain partners. Processes include standard operating procedures, safety protocols, training manuals, and a written business, sales, and marketing plan. The people and processes ensure an efficient, well managed operation which leads to repeatable customer experiences. Physical evidence such as the curb appeal of a front office or production facility, the presence of a website,

or the tactile nature of a printed invoice lend credibility. These all build consumer and/or buyer confidence.

Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Investing in adequate people and processes to support the needs of the business and meet the needs of the customers can often be cost prohibitive, exceeding the producers’ profitability during growth periods and even at scale.
- Often producers do not tie marketing strategies and budget to measurable goals and objectives, measure performance regularly to assess impact, or update the plan as needed following review and analysis.

Opportunities

- Certifications such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) may help producers access new markets.
- When businesses create and adhere to written standard operating procedures, it can improve employee retention, employee training, production efficiency, product quality, owner stress, and customer relations.
- The Farm to Plate

Producer-Distributor Database is a process-driven tool that can introduce local producers to retailers and distributors.

Summary

With market saturation at every level from farmers markets to retail settings, local producers must increasingly invest in their marketing mix—product, price, promotion, place, people, process, and physical evidence—to survive and thrive.

Recommendations

- Provide annual funding for marketing and graphic design consultants to assist Vermont producers with messaging, branding, packaging, point of sale, and social media. Cost: \$50,000 per year, 10 producers annually.
- Provide \$500,000 in annual state funding for a collaborative statewide marketing and consumer messaging campaign focusing on buy local, direct-to-consumer sales, and reinforcing the value in the premium paid for local products. “Get Cultured in Vermont” (a collaboration between the Vermont Department of Tourism and Cabot Cheese) is an example.
- Provide grants for local

food producers and service providers to attend national sales and marketing industry events, such as the Natural and Specialty Foods Sales Manager seminar. This will increase exposure to industry norms and trends, and help attendees engage with regional and national buyers, distributors, brokers, senior management, and industry professionals. Cost: \$5,000 per year.

- Develop a technical assistance and mentorship program focused on the seven P’s of marketing: Product, Price, Promotion, Placement, People, Processes, and Physical Evidence. Content should include cost of production, margins, market channels, distribution, brokers and contract sales, branding, push and pull marketing, customer service, customer retention, and consumer confidence. Program should be a cohort model, to foster peer-to-peer engagement. An existing Vermont technical assistance provider could adopt such a program, with additional funding from the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative or other state funding opportunity. Estimated cost: \$25,000 per year, 15 producers annually.
- Create three Vermont marketing broker positions to develop the regional market for a strategic catalog of Vermont products. The brokers would pilot a three-year program, identifying and developing top market channel opportunities within three target urban centers in the northeast. Cost: \$600,000 over three years.

FARM FEATURE:

Champlain Orchards

By Ollie Cultrara & Kim Burns, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Visual training is an educational tool that can be beneficial for anyone, but it is especially useful for learners with language or literacy barriers. Farms that train their employees on food safety policies have found visual

materials to be helpful tools to teach and reinforce food safety concepts. In the Farm Feature series, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets Produce Program highlights practices that fruit and vegetable growers use to enhance food safety, increase efficiency, protect product quality, and improve employee satisfaction. This month, we're featuring

Champlain Orchards, grower of more than 150 varieties of apples and fruits on 757 acres in Shoreham.

Visual Worker Training

Champlain Orchards hires 58 seasonal workers every year to work in their orchards and packing facility. Their crew includes U.S.-based workers and H-2A temporary agricultural workers from other countries, all with different English reading and writing skills. Language barriers can prevent successful food safety training. Simon Wurst, the Food Safety and Plant Manager of Champlain Orchards, has found that image-based slides help overcome these barriers and enhance learning. The slides contain minimal words and are shown on a screen for larger groups. They can also be displayed in a binder for smaller groups. Images are then supplemented with verbal training and discussion.

Why it works

Wurst explains that by using images, trainees are more engaged. The trainees ask questions and share concerns for each topic discussed. Wurst says the presentation also opens people up to provide suggestions for improvements. The training guarantees the employees are on the same page with food safety policies and practices.

It also ensures Champlain Orchards is compliant with food safety regulations and customer expectations.

Taking the next step

For more information about on-farm food safety and resources for effective worker training, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/produce. Get in touch with the Vermont Produce Program at AGR.Produce@vermont.gov



Champlain Orchards' visual training materials use photos and illustrations to depict key food safety concepts and policies workers must follow.

Apply now for Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Business Enhancement Grants!

The mission of the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative is to grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont's working landscape. The Business Enhancement grant is available to farm, food, and forest businesses to support projects ranging from \$20,000-35,000. Activities for these grants may include:

- Market development: accessing new markets and securing new customers, certification costs relevant to marketing (i.e., brand development, promotion, public relations)
- Marketing plan development: contracted work to build or enhance a business marketing plan and/or implement one or more marketing components
- Research and development: testing new systems or technology
- Infrastructure development: project-specific planning, permitting, engineering or architectural plans, building and equipment costs
- Energy focused projects: lighting, refrigeration/cooling, heat pumps, solar panels, low-energy water management, ventilation systems, and/or energy generation. Project costs can include equipment, installation, and/or technical assistance.

Application Deadline: October 28, 2022 at 11:59 PM

Award Notification: January 2023

Estimated Project Date Start: February 2023

For more information, visit <https://workinglands.vermont.gov/businessgrants>. Contact Clare Salerno at Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov or 802-917-2637).



Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP) Open for Applications

By Nina Gage, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to announce that funding is available for farmers in the Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP). Financial assistance is available for new or used innovative equipment that will aid in the reduction of surface runoff to agricultural wastes to State waters, improve water quality of State waters, reduce odors from manure application, separate phosphorus from manure, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, or reduce costs to farmers. Eligible applicants include custom applicators, nonprofit organizations, phosphorus extraction equipment providers, and Vermont farms required to comply with the Required Agricultural Practices.

CEAP is a reimbursement style grant program, which means applicants, once selected for funding, will have to purchase 100%

Eligible Equipment Purposes and Funding Rates		
Equipment Purpose	Examples of Eligible Equipment	Funding Rates <i>Award amount may vary depending on the project type, cost, and expected results.</i>
Precision Agriculture: to accurately and digitally observe, monitor and respond to field variability and improve nutrient management planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GPS, Flow Meter & Display UnitManure or Yield Constituent SensorPrecision Feed Equipment	90% cost-share up to \$25,000 per applicant
Conservation Tillage: To reduce the frequency or intensity of tillage operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No-Till PlanterRidge-TillPlanter Downforce	90% cost-share up to \$30,000 per applicant
Cover Crop Equipment: To increase or improve cover cropping implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No-Till Grain DrillRoller Crimper	90% cost-share up to \$50,000 per applicant
Waste Management: To improve waste and nutrient management, nutrient application efficiency and methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">InjectorsWaste irrigationDragline systemMethane captureComposting equipment (for compost principally produced and used on farm)	90% cost-share up to \$60,000 per applicant NOTE: A precision manure record keeping system (GPS, Flow Meter & Display Unit) must be used with waste management equipment funded under the CEAP program. If applicant does not have guaranteed access to an operational precision system to use with their waste management equipment, a precision system must be included in application.
Feed Management: To reduce impacts from silage leachate and reduce feed imports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Balers/Wrappers	90% cost-share up to \$50,000 per applicant

of the equipment and will be reimbursed by the State up to 90% of the actual cost, or up to the corresponding funding cap by category. Please note that shipping/freight fees are not reimbursable costs.

CEAP applications are due by November 1, 2022. Application requirements include completion of the

CEAP Application, an applicant questionnaire, and quotes for the requested equipment. Letter/s of support are optional and should add relevant and helpful information about your application if submitted. Please refrain from including letters of support which may clearly be biased. We highly encourage applicants to apply online to ensure a timely receipt of applications. This method of submission also provides applicants with confirmation that their application has been received.

Notification of grant awards will occur by February 1, 2023, and equipment purchase will be required after award notice and before June 1, 2023.

To learn more about the Capital Equipment Assistance Program or to review the application and

program details, including application ranking criteria, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/ceap or email AGR.WaterQuality@Vermont.gov. You can also reach out to Agency staff below if you

have additional questions:

- Nina Gage
Nina.Gage@Vermont.gov
cell: 802-622-4098
- Sonia Howlett
Sonia.Howlett@Vermont.gov
cell: 802-522-4655

Capital Equipment Assistance Program Information Session & Workshop

The Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District is hosting a free Information Session and Workshop about the Agency's Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP) on October 12th, 2022 from 10am to 1pm at the American Legion, located at 100 Parah Drive in St. Albans.

CEAP is one of few grant programs which supports the purchase of equipment like GPS systems, no-till drills and draglines. This is a great place to hear the program specifics and workshop directly with the Agency. The NRCS, as well as UVM Extension, will also give presentations on precision ag strategies to optimize cropping management and conserve resources.

Please contact info@FranklinCountyNRCD.org or 802-528-4176 to RSVP. Free parking. Coffee and baked goods will be provided.

Mark Vosburg



ESCH 5612 No-Till Grain Drill for cover cropping purchased by CEAP 2022 grant recipient Vosburg Farms in St. Albans, VT.

VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,
University of Vermont
Extension
802-257-7967 ext. 303, or
vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
www.vvbga.org

Reports From The Field

(East Dorset) 2022 was a challenging year for a couple reasons. We certainly had issues with the dryness/lack of rain over the course of the season. The bigger issue was the crop loss due to wildlife. We have always had minor losses, but they never amounted to much. This season we estimate a 35 to 45% loss in pounds of blueberries picked compared to prior years. Next year we will probably need to install fencing or netting. We had deer, bear, squirrels, chipmunks, turkeys, and birds all poaching the field. Lots of fruit eaten and many branches broken.

The bear was the most interesting, because in years past he would only come in the middle of the night when it was cool, and no people were around, and he came every two or three nights. This year he rambled through the fields anytime day or night. He was very persistent and came every day. We got no help from our pickers to run him off. They all enjoyed watching him eat sometimes as close as 15 to 20 feet

away. When they came into the store, they were happy to show us their videos and photos. We gave some of our regular pickers airhorns and asked them to frighten the bear away, but they never used them. It would've been a more profitable season if we had sold wildlife viewing passes rather than blueberries.

We called the county game warden. He showed up one day with his wife and child and saw the bear while they were picking blueberries. But he offered no solutions. On a humorous note, one of our pickers yelled at me when I was scaring the bear away one afternoon. She said "Leave the bear alone. He's not hurting anyone." I told her who I was, and that I was worried the bear was getting too comfortable around people.

(Burlington) Late summer is rolling toward autumn and we have our work cut out for us. Many of our storage crops look good: onion yield is strong, and quality looks good, despite a downy mildew outbreak and some early season wireworm losses. Squash is holding leaves nicely, and fall brassicas look great, though cabbage aphids are showing in small numbers.

(Westminster) We're transitioning into our fall crops, with carrot and red and gold beet harvest underway. A few weedy beet fields are being harvested by hand and we're still picking some bunched beets, although the tops are starting to die back.

The winter squash harvest will start soon, and it looks really good. The dry weather has been great for the crop,

keeping down disease. The foliage is green with no dieback, which protects the green-skinned varieties like acorn and buttercup from sunburn. Harvest of storage cabbage will begin soon, as well.

The chard is almost done after a good season; kale and lettuce are still going strong. We just put our last planting of lettuce; only red and green leaf, because romaine and Boston are susceptible to downy mildew in the fall. We'll soon be planting fall field spinach. And we're still harvesting plenty of sweet corn. Some will be frozen for sale to local school systems.

(Guildhall) The end of July and first 3 weeks of August were very dry, but this past week we've had some good rain. Much needed, as a test dig 8/20 confirmed a great tuber set, but small sizes. Even since then we've been getting more chefs out of the little digging we're doing. Too distracted by construction to dig new potatoes at scale. Barns need rooves.

Really good news, we always plant whites on our lowest pH field, and this year the field was at 5.2 and those spuds are clean clean clean. No scab, no rhizoc, no nothing.

(E. Wallingford) Still picking blueberries (Elliot) with no signs of SWD this year. Good pruning and trying to keep fruit off the ground seems to help. We received some decent rain in the last week or so and that really helped the pumpkins, sizing up nicely and starting to turn orange. Winter squash look good except where deer are eating.

Ordered peach trees for spring 2023 planting, high density V system.

(Westminster West) We got an inch of rain a few days ago, too late for summer crops but a nice boost to the fall carrots, Gilfeather and Napa crops. Almost finished with the squash harvest and starting on pumpkins tomorrow. Seems like crops are at least a week earlier than last year and the yields and quality are much better. Almost all our crops are on drip lines with plastic mulch to maximize water efficiency and this was the year it really paid off.

First year I didn't need to spray the squash crop for insects or PM, I love dry years! Weed control was as good as it can be with the dry weather, except for potatoes which continue to mock me as far as weed control! But the potato crop looks great despite little rain; I did plant on historically wet fields so there's that. Covering the crop with remay really helped keep CPB away and

pushing the crop to maturity as all potatoes are ready now.

Farm Transfer Planning for Fruit and Vegetable Growers

Zac Smith, UVM Extension
Agricultural Business Educator

Succession planning is often complex and dynamic, with a variety of issues to address. The UVM Extension Agricultural Business team recently conducted a survey of Vermont farms in regard to farm succession preparedness. Nearly half the respondents requested business planning support for transitioning ownership of the farm. In response to this need, the team created a service that allows farmers to directly contact us and be assigned a specialist to help farmers find the information they need, and to provide feedback on developing a plan to address their farm's unique needs. This is a free service. Click here to contact the agricultural business team.



Proud pumpkin owner with the first pumpkin he's grown.

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To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

Beef cow (approx. 1300lb, 3 y/o, open) + calf. Angus x Hereford. Calm, halter broken, fence trained. \$2000 obo. 802-258-7088 (12)

Lowline Angus heifers for sale. 3 open heifers ready to breed @ \$800 each. One 3 year old with a calf at her side born 7/6/22 priced at \$1000. Grass fed, not certified organic. Trucking available at an extra cost. Call Vince Foy, N. Danville, Vt., 802-748-8461. (12)

4 year old angus bull for sale and 6-7 month old steers and heifers for sale. 802-558-8196 (12)

Two Jersey heifers for sale. Both bottle fed and halter trained. "Charlotte" #68876, born June 29, 2021, sire - "Reckless" "Butterscotch" - #68960, born in early July 2021, sire - "Whistler" \$1000 each. 802-454-1856 or greatbrooknursery@gmail.com. (12)

Equipment

13 ft roller. John Deere 39 3pt hitch mower. 10 ton grain bin. 802-62400143 (9)

Dr. Stewart Clipmaster cattle clippers with extra blades \$100.00. Complete set of shoes fit 3200 cattle used 1 month \$50. (9)

New Idea 5209 disc mower, Fahr Tedder (4 rotor) KH 500, JD 894 rake and M-F 120 baler. Baler is fresh out of dealer, small bales, good knotters. All together for \$13,000. 802-316-7815 (10)

Delaval 1250 gal bulk tank. Patz gutter cleaner- counter clockwise, approximately 350 ft of chain. 7630 John Deere tractor, new in 2007. 3,500

hours. IVT transmission, economy PTO active seat, suspended front end, ax10bib tires – rear view camera. 835 John Deere Moco mower – center pivot new in 2008 – 1000 rpm pto 11' 6" cutting swath. Anderson bale wrapper new in 2014 model rb680 – Honda engine, hand-held remote control. Meyers VB440 vertical beater manure spreader, new in 2018. Call 802-563-2332 or email hazelgreavestaxservice@gmail.com (11)

Manure Spreader for sale. H & S 2117. Like new. Used once to clean barnyard after auction. Call Jerry 802-446-2791.

General

14 acre fertilized field for contract use. Located at 23 School St. in N. Springfield, Vt. Land is high and dry. Call Karl 802 886-1473 (10)

Hay, Feed & Forage

Excellent quality first cut wrapped round bales; baleage. Shelburne VT Call Andy 802-598-6060. Analysis available upon request. (3)

Organic haylage 12% protein \$45 per ton, 15% protein \$55 per ton. 802-537-2435 (3)

4x4 round balage mixed grains cut late June. \$30 802-325-3707 (3)

1st cut 4x5 round bales. Don Pettis, 802-265-4566. (3)

Certified Organic First and Second cut wrapped round bales for sale. Clover, Timothy and mixed grasses. Test samples and delivery available. Call Matt at 802-558-3879. (3)

Vetch & rye seeds for sale, mixed in 50 lb. bags, \$1/lb. certified by Vermont Organic Farmers. Thornhill Farm, 198 Taylor Road, Greensboro Bend, VT 05842, todd@thornhillfarmvermont.com, 802-441-3176 (3)

2021 First cut \$4.00 at barn in Ryegate. Steve 802-584-4450 (3)

Hay for sale: 1st cut organic round bales. Randolph Center. Call John at 522-8798 (3)

Excellent quality first, second, and third cut wrapped round bales for sale. First cut by June 1, dry. \$50.00/bale Please call 802-454-7198 (3)

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale at the bunk. 802-533-2984. (3)

Dry 2nd Cut Hay for Sale 5' round bales, avg. 750 lbs, \$100/bale- Craftsbury, VT 802-624-0539 (3)

Certified organic 4x4 round bales for sale. First cut 45.00, second and third 55.00. 802-793-7526 (3)

1st Cut 4 x 4 Wrapped round bales \$45/bale Call Tom at 802-457-5834 (3)

1st, 2nd & 3rd cut round bales. 2nd cut square bales - \$6.00 per bale. Volume discount for square and round bales. Please call Chris, 802-272-0548. (3)

Certified Organic wrapped round bales. Mid-summer first cut @ \$45/bale and 2nd and 3rd cut @ \$55/bale loaded at the farm in N. Danville. All hay is tedded and raked and feeds out like dry hay. Definitely not frozen. Perfect for small as well as large ruminates. Email Vince at badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call 802-748-8461. (3)

Certified organic wrapped round bales – 1st & 2nd cutting 802-592-3356 (3)

400 Wrapped Bales Available. 1st May cut. 2nd June cut. 3rd July cut. Call 802-446-2791 (12)



4 X 4 wrapped baleage, good quality. Certified organic. Fair prices. Call Phil at 802-254-6982 (5)

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale at the bunk. Call 802-533-2984. (5)

ADDISON COUNTY

June 1 cut 4 x 5 round bales for sale \$45 a bale. Approximately 1000 ton of corn silage \$58 per ton. call 802-989-0793 (7)

4 x 5 2nd cut round bales for sale \$50 A bale. 4 x 5 straw bales for sale \$60 a bale call 802-989-0793. (7)

CALEDONIA COUNTY

2022 square bales \$4.50 1st, \$5.50 2nd, at the barn in Ryegate. Call Steve or Jamie 802-584-4450 (7)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY

First cut wrapped round bales, processed. Great heifer or beef hay. Analysis available upon request. Huntington VT Call or text Tim: 802-363-9770 \$45 loaded (8)

June cut hay, never wet, will load, 4' x 4' round bales, \$45/bale, quantity discount/ cash prices available. Westford, 802-355-2930 (12)

FRANKLIN COUNTY

200 tons certified organic corn silage stored in an ag bag. Will load for you. 180 wrapped 4x4 certified organic round bales, 18% protein. Price negotiable. Highgate Center, VT 802-868-7535 If no answer, please leave a message. (9)

Certified organic wrapped round bales. The hay is dry, or close to dry. We have forage sample results if interested. Trucking can be arranged. \$45-55/bale depending on which hay is taken. 802-752-5669

LAMOILLE COUNTY

Organic baled straw. \$5.50/bale. Organic First Cut Hay. \$5.00/bale. Certified Organic. Valley Dream Farm, Cambridge. 802-644-6598. valleydreamfarm@gmail.com. (3)

ORANGE COUNTY

Large square bales. 1st, 2nd and 3rd cutting plus mulch bales. Wrapped and dry. 1000+ available. Some round bales available too. 802-236-7741 or csfarm1@gmail.com (12)

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Excellent Quality. First, second, and third cut wrapped round bales. Dry. Perfect for horses, dairy, or goats. \$50/bale. No emails. Please call 802-454-7198. (5)

100+ 4x4 wrapped round bales \$50 each 802-793-3511 (12)

WINDSOR COUNTY

4 x 4 wrapped bales, 1st green \$45., dry \$55. 2nd green \$50., dry \$60. Royalton, 802-356-1402 royalvillagefarm@gmail.com (4)

Quality first cut wrapped round bales for sale 40\$ Each 802-674-2417 (5)

Wanted

Co-producer wanted on an organic livestock farm in Danville, Vt. Looking for

CLASSIFIEDS

someone interested in starting their own enterprise with the opportunity to market through our on farm store. Would barter/hire for assistance with ongoing operations. Currently have capacity to house extra cattle

and would entertain other plant and animal production ideas as well. Check out Vt. Landlink listing for Lewis Creek Jerseys for more details. Email badgerbrookmeats@gmail or call Vince at 802-748-8461. (12)

JD 720 diesel with pony motor start. Looking for Serial # 7226525. Call or text 802-855-0446 (12)

Fahr KH-4S tedder for parts. Contact Dan @ 802 482-2047 (12)

Agency Contact Numbers

To help you find the right number for your question, please consult the list below. You are always welcome to call our main line 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	802-461-6798
Animal Health	802-828-2421
Business Development.....	802-828-1619
Dairy	802-828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality or Pesticide ..	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime.....	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection	802-828-2426
Produce Program	802-522-7811
VT Agriculture & Environmental Lab...	802-585-6073
Water Quality BMP.....	802-828-3474
Water Quality Grants	802-622-4098
Water Quality Reports.....	802-272-0323
Weights & Measures	802-828-2433
Working Lands.....	802-917-2637

AG HALL OF FAME



The Ag Hall of Fame inductees for 2022 during the Champlain Valley Fair on August 31, 2022. From right to left, State Senator Robert Starr, Taylor Mendel, Paul Percy, Eric Paris, and Jackie Folsom are pictured with Governor Scott.

4-H NEWS

4-H'ers Vie for Championships at State 4-H Dairy Show



Show judge Betsy Bullard of Turner, Maine (left), presents the Senior Fitting and Showmanship trophy to Sarah Hill, Bristol, who showed a Milking Shorthorn fall calf at the State 4-H Dairy Show, held Aug. 14-15 in Tunbridge. (photo: Whitney Dunklee)

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities

Molly Brook Farm Named Dairy Farm of the Year

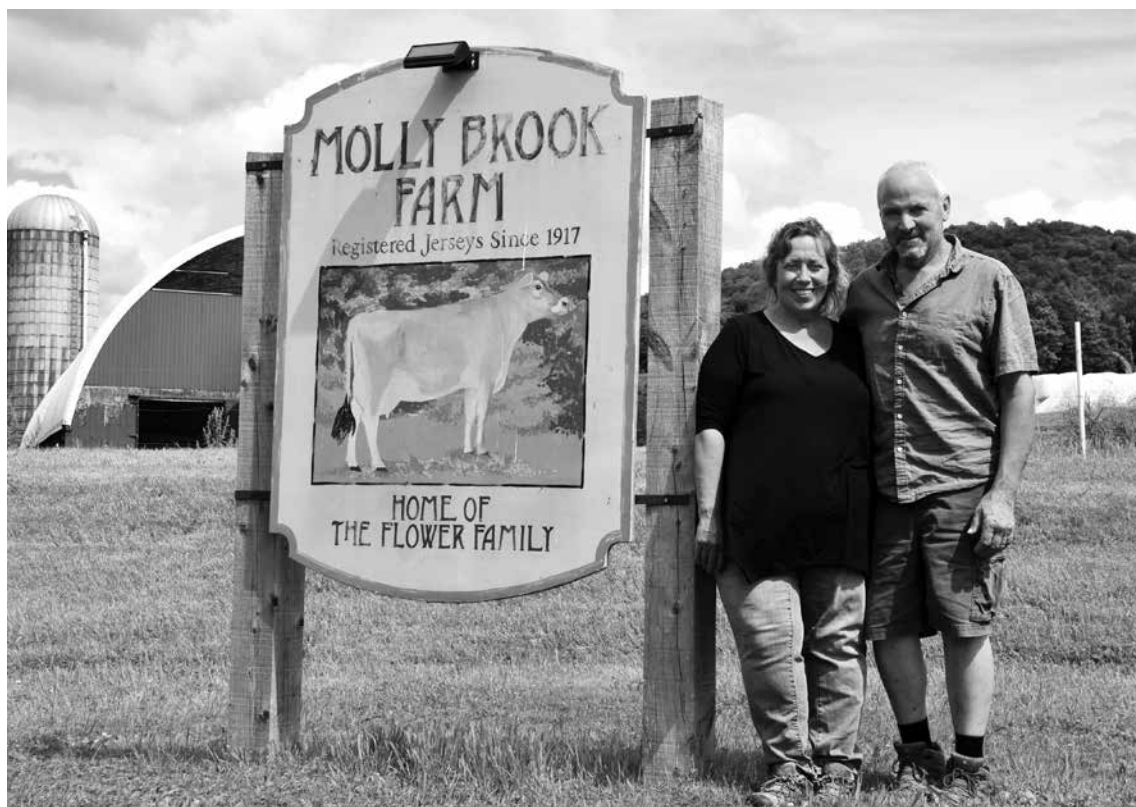
By Lisa Halvorsen, Freelance Agricultural Journalist for UVM Extension

Like many Vermont farms, Molly Brook Farm in Cabot can claim ownership by the same family for generations. Its current owners, Myles and Rhonda Goodrich, are the seventh generation of dairy producers on a farm established almost two centuries ago.

The farm has a distinguished history and is renowned internationally for its superior Jersey genetics. Since 2018, it's been a successful certified organic dairy with a high-producing herd that has earned several quality milk awards from Stonyfield Organic, where they ship their milk.

It comes as no surprise that this 565-acre hillside farm recently received another accolade, that of being named the 2022 Vermont Dairy Farm of the Year. The farm is the only one to have won this award twice. The first time was in 1987 when Myles' parents, Walter and Sally Goodrich, operated the farm in partnership with Myles.

The award is presented annually to an exemplary, financially sound and efficiently managed dairy operation, representative of the best farms in Vermont by University of Vermont (UVM) Extension and the Vermont Dairy Industry Association, in cooperation with the New England Green Pastures Program.



Molly Brook Farm owners Myles and Rhonda Goodrich

Nominated farms are evaluated on a number of criteria including herd management, pasture quality,

milk production records, land stewardship and conservation practices, promotion of the dairy industry and overall

excellence in dairying. The winner is selected by a team of judges comprised of past Vermont Dairy Farm of the

Year winners who interview the finalists and tour their farms to observe their operations.

Asked why their farming operation has endured for generations, Rhonda believes, "What's been consistent through the generations is love for the cows and the land that has been hard earned. That's what binds us, generation after generation. We are all in, in every aspect of this. We are always learning, using all resources available to us."

The family was honored at an awards banquet at Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts, in September, along with the Green Pastures Program winners from the other New England states. Other finalists for this year's award were Mike and Denna Benjamin, Franklin, and Skyline Holsteins, Derby.

Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Helps UVM Professor Study the Invasive Jumping Worm

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

In 2019, The University of Vermont received a Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) grant to research the invasive pest known as jumping worm (*Amyntas* spp.). The jumping worm is present in twelve out of fourteen Vermont counties and has been in

some locations for more than a decade. However, it appears to be spreading more recently. Its effects on Vermont's agriculture and forests are not fully known. University of Vermont professor Dr. Josef Görres and PhD student Maryam Nouri-Aiin are conducting research to uncover more about the worm and how to control it.

The "jumping worm"

is a group a group of invasive earthworm species originating in Asia. Jumping worms live on the soil surface just under the leaf litter in forests, gardens, and agricultural landscapes. They rapidly consume organic matter and excrete castings that resemble coffee grounds. The grainy worm castings can easily erode, exposing tree roots. This creates an understory

environment that welcomes establishment of invasive plant species. When speaking on the effect that invasive worms have on Vermont's ecology, Görres said, "Forests will change if the worms continue to spread."

Jumping worms can also affect Vermont specialty crop producers including maple operations, plant nurseries, and composting

continued on page 15

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT:

Vermont Shepherd Talks Sheep

By Brockton Corbett, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

In any industry, creating support for new and existing professionals is vital to its success. This is just as true in the northeast dairy industry as any other. It's important that this support comes from experienced professionals who have been in the field, sometimes literally, for some time.

Vermont Shepherd is a family-owned and operated sheep and dairy farm located in Putney, Vermont. With over 30 years of experience, the owners of the farm have a strong understanding of the landscapes their business exists in. They understand the opportunity that the goat and sheep dairy supply chains represent in Vermont, and they are excited to share their expertise with other folks interested in cultivating and/or maintaining a flock of their own.

In 2021, Vermont Shepherd was awarded a Goat and Sheep Dairy Supply Chain grant for \$42,062.00 from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center. This grant is contributing to the supply chain in a few ways. Firstly, it is enhancing the genetic pool available to Vermont farmers. Secondly, it is enabling them to work with new and existing farmers and teach them how to manage a flock and produce high quality products. Vermont Shepherd is also working with the public to



Vermont Shepherd was one of the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center's recipients of the Goat and Sheep Dairy Supply Chain Grant from 2021.

increase understanding of sheep and sheep dairy products.

To achieve their goal of improving the genetic pool of dairy sheep in the area, Vermont Shepherd is employing two techniques: milk metering and regular infectious disease testing. Milk metering collects milk from each of the ewes allowing Vermont Shepherd to analyze the milk's quality and quantity. They can selectively breed ewes with the best milk production using this information. In addition, regularly testing their lambs for infectious disease will ensure the sheep stock Vermont Shepherd sells to other farmers in the region will be healthy and produce increased volumes of high-quality milk.

In addition to improving the sheep stock in the area, Vermont Shepherd is also delivering an educa-

tional workshop series to a cohort of new and existing sheep dairy farmers. They are recruiting participants

from surrounding states. The workshops educate participants on how to run and operate a sheep farm and

dairy with topics including lambing, milking, pasture management, dairy sheep health, and processing, and marketing sheep milk products. Drawing on their decades of experience and pulling in experts to teach, workshops like these are invaluable to new and existing farmers, especially for an industry that has largely been out of the spotlight. As consumers interest only grows in sheep and goat products, as highlighted in research funded by NE-DBIC, opportunities to educate new farmers is key to the success of dairy farmers in the Northeast.

If you get a chance, go visit the folks and flock at Vermont Shepherd!

4-H NEWS

Vermont 4-H Teamsters Compete In Two Shows



Above, Matt Whitney, Chelsea (left), and Lily Larocque, Randolph Center, pose with their working steer teams after each earned a blue ribbon in fitting and showmanship at the 4-H working steer show that took place at Highland Farm in Pomfret on Aug. 13.



Below, Braintree 4-H'er Amanda Ferris earned perfect scores in all three events at the 4-H working steer show, Aug. 13, at Highland Farm in Pomfret.

*Photos by Wendy Sorrell/
UVM Extension 4-H)*

Jumping Worms

continued from page 13

facilities. The worms and their cocoons spread through leaf mulch, wood chips, compost, nursery plants, and soil. Another pathway for spread is if they are sold as fishing bait or used for vermicomposting.

With the help of the Vermont SCBGP grant, Görres studied the worm's impact and trialed effective vermicides (chemical or biological treatments). Görres also educated growers & landscapers on how to identify an infestation and best management practices (BMPs). It is important to note that jumping worm research is ongoing, and there are currently no pesticides labeled for use against jumping worms. In the meantime, Dr. Görres encourages growers to put in place preventative measures. These include sanitation of tools & equipment, growing plants from seed when possible, transplanting bareroot plants, and inspecting nursery stock. It is also recommended to use only heat-treated soil, compost, wood chips, and mulch.

One of the main ways the public can help is to learn to identify the jumping worm. Jumping worms differ from other earthworms as they have smooth bodies and thrashing, snake-like movement. In the late summer to early fall, the jumping worm's clitellum (a band encircling the worm's body) becomes pronounced. The jumping worm's clitellum is much lighter in color and flush with the body, unlike in European earthworms where the clitellum is raised and does not completely encircle the body.

If you find jumping worms, post a photo of them to iNaturalist ([iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org)). This will help track the jumping worm's spread in Vermont. The current treatment methods are to till and/or solarize the soil materials that the worms live in. Jumping worms can also be hand-picked and drowned in soapy water or alcohol or put into sealed plastic bags in the trash. For more information, visit vtinvasives.org/invasive/jumping-worms or visit the Agency's website at agriculture.vermont.gov and search for "invasive pests."



The invasive jumping worm is easily identified by its lightly-colored clitellum (arrow).

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley
Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov
802-828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour
Mary.Montour@vermont.gov
802-461-6087

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett
Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov
802-522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos
Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov
802-461-3814

Phil Wilson
Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov
802-505-5378

October

Capital Equipment Assistance Program
Purchase of innovative farm equipment that aids in the reduction of runoff.

Nina Gage
Nina.Gage@vermont.gov
802-622-4098

October

Working Lands Enterprise Fund Business Enhancement Grants

Grants available for agriculture and forest businesses.

Clare Salerno
Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov
802-917-2637

October

Dairy Farm Innovation Grant

Grants for dairy farmers to implement community- and climate-forward production strategies.

Kathryn Donovan
Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov
802-585-4571

October

Farm to School and Early Childhood Grant

Grants to help schools and early childhood organizations develop farm to school programs or farm to early childhood programs.

Gina Clithero
Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov
802-585-6225

October

Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

Provides grants for dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations to take steps to improve the safety of dairy products.

Brockton Corbett
Brockton.Corbett@vermont.gov
802-498-5111

November

Agricultural Fairs & Field Days Capital Grants and Operational Stipends

Grants for 20-year capital improvements & operational stipends for fairs and field days.

Drew Watson
Andrew.Watson@vermont.gov
802-636-7793

November/December

Working Lands ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Impact Grant

Grants available for primary agricultural and forestry producers.

Clare Salerno
Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov
802-917-2637

Small Axe Farm's Solar Array Demonstrates Positive Impacts of Renewable Energy on Vermont's Farms

By Clare Salerno, Vt Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

T rue to its name, Small Axe Farm in Barnet, VT is a small but mighty one acre, no till, off-grid, certified organic market farm. Co-owners Heidi Choate and Evan Perkins have been selling vegetables and berries grown on their farm for 13 years. Starting from a small cabin with no running water or electricity, they've stewarded the land for almost two decades. Small Axe Farm is driven by a mission to learn how to farm its steep hillside in a manner that addresses climate change, supports worker longevity, and serves as a model of renewable energy for the rest of Vermont.

This year, Small Axe Farm received a \$24,999 grant from the Working Lands

"Being off grid allows us to truly understand and be constantly aware of our energy use and needs for the farm."

— Heidi Choate

Enterprise Fund (WLEF) to build an additional solar power off grid system, including roof mounted panels, batteries, and a new inverter. The business had previously received a \$9,000 grant from WLEF in 2018 to install initial solar batteries. Installed in May, the new solar array was transformative during this summer's farm season. Small Axe Farm can now meet all its power needs, including irrigation, cold storage, wash/pack, auxiliary lighting for microgreens, and ventilation fans in propagation houses.


The ripple effects of these changes are felt throughout the farm: produce safety is improved through consistent cooling and wash/pack station use, more space is available for microgreens and propagation, and employees can more easily load produce to and from the cold storage space rather than moving product through the root cellar. In the future, Small Axe Farm hopes to add electric delivery vehicle and an electric utility vehicle. Co-owner Evan emphasizes that while the increased power supply is especially transformative for their off-grid farm, on-grid enterprises can still reap many of these

benefits from renewable and efficient energy systems.

For the past several years, Small Axe Farm has hired at least three full time employees during the growing season, and this year was able to hire five. The system improvements across all aspects of the farm resulting from the solar array have drastically improved employee quality of life, and the efficiencies created room to increase wages.

According to Heidi, "being off grid allows us to truly understand and be constantly aware of our energy use and needs for the farm. Because we have had to pay for that energy up front, it has forced us to be frugal and has helped us to live within our environmental values." With their new solar array, Small Axe Farm shines as a model for renewable energy-based agriculture that produces high-yield and high-quality produce while respecting the labor, people, and land that make all that possible.





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